

**CITY OF ROCKVILLE PLANNING DIVISION
STAFF REPORT**

April 26, 2002

SUBJECT: Map Amendment No. MAP2001-00076 – 117 South Van Buren Street

Historic Designation of 117 South Van Buren Street from R-90 to R-90HD

Location: 117 South Van Buren Street

Description: Lot 12 and part lot 13, Van Buren Street Extended

Size: 19,965 square feet

Planning Commission Date: May 8, 2002

Mayor and Council Public Hearing Date: June 17, 2002

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission concur that the property is eligible for historic designation and find that such zoning will not present an adverse impact to the planning area or neighborhood. The basic underlying zone and use of the property will not change; therefore, staff does not anticipate any changes in condition.

Planning Area Description

The Evans house at 117 South Van Buren Street is located in Planning Area Four, West End and Woodley Gardens East-West neighborhoods. Planning Area Four is a mix of single-family residential, garden apartments, townhouses, and senior citizen housing. The *Draft Comprehensive Master Plan Amendment to the 1993 Plan* remarks: "Parts of Planning Area 4 were among the areas first settled in Rockville....In addition, (to those within the historic district) there are scattered homes through the planning area that have some historical or architectural significance although they are not within the historic district". The Evans House is a site with a significant history, but undesignated.

The house now fronts on South Van Buren Street, but as built, it faced Great Falls Road on a 10 + acre parcel. Waring and Kate Evans built the house in 1922 as a summer retreat. It had the elements of a prosperous family's summer estate including a magnificent view, tennis courts, a swimming pool, gardens, and easy commuting by trolley and B&O Railroad to Washington D.C. As time passed, the property was sold and it became a year-round residence. The ten-acre parcel was subdivided and more houses were built. The orientation of the house was changed to front on S. Van Buren Street. The house had similar massing on the front and rear and it is likely that the rear entrance also served as a main entrance to the house. The new subdivided lots were accessed by a street named Evans Street after the family. Later, the house was owned by the Bouic, Prettyman, McCabe and Whelan families, families that have contributed to Rockville's history and development.

The current owners wish to maintain the house as an asset to Rockville. The surrounding neighborhood is residential. The West Montgomery Avenue Historic District is across the street, but

there is an undesignated house between this property and the nearest contiguous historic district lot. Therefore, it is proposed as a single site (landmark) historic district.

Planning Process

The property was nominated for historic district status as a landmark by the owners who requested consideration from the Mayor and Council in a letter dated October 31, 2001. The Historic District Commission, property owners, civic organizations, and interested parties were notified by first class mail of the review for significance at the February 20, 2002 HDC meeting and the history and agenda were placed on the City's Internet web site. At that meeting, the HDC took testimony and comments on the archeological, architectural, historical, or cultural significance of 117 South Van Buren Street. All comments were in favor of designation. Peerless Rockville submitted a letter in favor of the designation. The owner answered questions and stated that they were in favor of designation. There were no comments in opposition.

No additional comments were submitted prior to the closing of the record on March 1, 2002. The Historic District Commission concurred with the speakers and voted to recommend 117 S. Van Buren to the Mayor and Council as a potential historic site on March 20, 2002. The Mayor and Council directed staff to file a Comprehensive Map Amendment application on April 8, 2002.

The HDC is limited to a review of the historic, cultural, archeological or architectural significance by State law. If the HDC finds that the proposed historic district meets the adopted criteria, the HDC recommends that the Mayor and Council consider the site for historic designation.

The Planning Commission reviews the information and recommendations of the Historic District Commission and makes a recommendation to the Mayor and Council. The Planning Commission review is not limited to historical and architectural significance, but should encompass other planning criteria. The basic underlying zone and use of the property will not change; therefore, staff does not anticipate any changes in conditions or any changes that would affect the Master Plan.

Public Outreach

Notices of the Historic District Commission (HDC) evaluation were sent via first class mail to the property owners, citizen's associations, adjacent property owners and other interested parties on February 12 and March 12, 2002. The site history, photographs of the site and neighborhood, and the agenda for the evaluation meeting were also posted on the city's web page.

Staff Comments

This rezoning was processed at the request of the owner. Designation will allow placement of a historical marker that tells the history and contribution of the property to the County and Rockville's history. The property will also be eligible for the 10% Montgomery County property tax credit, and the 20% State of Maryland income tax credit for the rehabilitation of historic properties as well as grants and loans. Any significant changes in material or design of any buildings will be reviewed by the Historic District Commission for compatibility, and any changes must retain, or not adversely impact, the character of the structure(s) and site.

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Attachments

- A. Site Map.
- B. History of 117 South Van Buren Street.
- C. Staff Analysis of Evaluation Hearing for 117 South Van Buren.
- D. Statement of Significance

